**ISU Step 1 Tips & Class Example: Topic Development Process Work**

**Topic of interest:** Groups: Group Behaviour & Conformity

**Questions of interest:**

***1st - First-Round Brainstorm:***

Group Dynamics:

*How are group norms established?*

Social Exclusion and Ethnic groups -

*Do all Ethnic groups have the same access to groups as everyone else?*

*How are ethnic groups affected by group membership?*

Collective Behaviour and Personalities -

*What types of personalities make good leaders?*

*How do narcissistic people operate in groups?*

*How do they affect group dynamics?*

Goals/Purpose/Influence of Group membership -

*How does group membership influence how we learn and make decisions?*

Social Interaction -   
*What influence do groups have on individuals’ thoughts and behaviours?*

Conformity (\*see Soloman Asch study)-

*What factors lead to conformity?*

***2nd - Focused Reflection Upon Brainstorm:*** (looking for trends in questions and sociological links)

1. *How are group norms and roles established and enforced?*
2. *How do varying styles of leadership influence group dynamics?*
3. *How does group membership influence how we learn, make decisions and act?*
4. *What influence do groups have on an individual's’ thoughts and behaviours when they’re alone vs. with the group?*
5. *What factors lead to conformity?*

**Group Inquiry Assignment** (*aka. “Mock ISU”)*

*HSP3C/U*

C.Free

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**Step 1-*****Subtopics and Central Focus Questions***

***SUBTOPICS:***

*Group Dynamics: Purpose, Norms, Roles & Behaviours*

*Social Influence: Social Learning Theories*

*Collective Behaviour: Groupthink and Conformity*

***FOCUS QUESTIONS:***

1. *Why do individuals join groups, and how are group norms created and enforced?*
2. *How do group norms and roles influence an individuals behaviour and thinking within the group?*
   1. *Does an individual’s personality and behaviour change around other members of a group?*
   2. *In what situations might an individual put the group’s best interests, before their own?*
   3. *What would they “get” from this type of commitment to the group?*
3. *Can group membership, and the desire to uphold one’s position within the group, lead an individual to think or behave in ways they would not normally?*

***Argument:***

*Individuals may be attracted to groups as membership may seem to provide them with some insight into “who they are” as individuals. However, group membership could actually lead one to “lose” a sense of who they are as an individual, because their biological desire to fit in and be part of a group may be more powerful than their desire to find out “who they are” as an individual; especially when the social phenomena of social conformity and groupthink are at play.*

***Working Hypothesis: It is important to not base your sole sense of “who you are” as a person on group affiliations, as individuals may conform to group standards by altering their thoughts and behaviours in order to uphold the norms and expectations set out by the group, which are not always consistent with how they would think or act on their own.***